distances services and would be on the same footing like other private sector operators but the Government would pay VSNL a sum equivalent to entry fee and annual revenue shares as licence fee, net of taxes for a period of 5 years with effect from April, 2001.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The highest bid for Rs. 1439.25 crores for 25% equity of VSNL tendered by Panatone Finvest Ltd. a Tata Group Company has been accepted, Shareholders Agreement & Share Purchase Agreement have been signed and management control of VSNL has been transferred *w.e.f.* 13/2/2002.

Reduction In STD Tariff

1190. SHRI CM. IBRAHIM:
SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU):

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether with the cut in STD tariffs by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd., (BSNL) from 14th January, 2002, other private and public sector players in the field have followed suit;

(b) if so, the details of the tariff reduction affected by other public and private sector operators; and

(c) how this tariff reduction has affected the over-all revenue-receipts of BSNL and other operators during the months following the reduction and the viability of the tariff structure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAP AN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Sir, consequent upon reduction of long distance tariffs by BSNL the only other National Long Distance Operator (NLDO) Bharti Telesonic Ltd. (BTSOL) which has recently launched its services under the brand name "India One", has followed suit. The pulse rates for inter circle national long distance offered by BSNL and BTSOL are given in the enclosed Statement. *(See* below)

(c) Initial estimates based on sample study conducted on some of the trunk automatic exchanges for some telecom circles in BSNL

indicate that the long distance metered call units have decreased by about 20% on an a average during February 2002. The long distance metered call units and revenue receipts are expected to grow in the coming months with the change in the subscriber's calling habits.

Statement

Pulse rates in seconds offered by National Long Distance Operators (BSNL and India One)

Distance Slabs in Kms.	BSNL			India One		
	Full pulse Rate	Concessional Pulse rates		Full pulse rates	i Concessional Pulse rates	
	Week Days	Week Days	National Holidays & Sunday	Week Days	Week Days	National Holidays & Sunday
	09.00 hrs to 20.00 hrs	20.00 hrs to 09.00 hrs	24 hrs	09.00 hrs to 20.00 hrs	20.00 hrs to 09.00 hrs	24 hrs
0-50	180	180	180	180	180	180
> 50-200	30	60	60	30	60	60
> 200-500	15	30	30	15	30	30
>500	8	16	16	8	16	16

* NLDO rates offered by India One are applicable for long distance calls made from cellular mobile to cellular mobile only.

VPT Facility in Gujarat

1191. SHRI BRAHMA KUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Gram Panchayats provided with the Village Public Telephone facility in Gujarat;

(b) the number of Gram Panchayats provided to have been provided with this facility by March, 2000 and 2001 in the State;